



THE LIBERATOR

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE LIBERAL ARTS COUNCIL
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN | FEBRUARY 27, 2012 | ISSUE 3

LIBERAL ARTS
REINVENTS RESEARCH

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FRIEND ZONE

AUSTIN COMEDY SCENE

40 ACRES OF
DIVERSITY

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

FEBRUARY 2012

FEATURES

- 03** Hum A Capella Fuses Cultures into Universal Sound
- 06** Professor Spotlight
Matt Richardson
- 09** Liberal Arts Reinvents Research
- 12** Student Spotlight:
Margaret Wellik
- NEWS**
- 04** Citizens of the Web Stand Up Against SOPA, PIPA
- 07** A Nation in Protest:
Finding Unity in Occupy
- 16** Campus updates

OPINION

- Teach For America:
Resume Builder?
- The Slacker :
Welcome to
the Friend Zone
- Student Voice

ENTERTAINMENT

- Forming a Game
Plan for SXSW
- Spring Break on a Budget:
Austin Style
- Laughing it Up in the
Capitol's Comedy Scene

ON THE COVER 10-11 | Diversity at UT

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

October Issue

Not only is the Liberator aesthetically pleasing, but extremely valuable in its content. This issue of the Liberator is full of current events and great campus oriented such as the Harry Ransom Center. I loved the article on the Harry Ransom Center because I feel like it is such an overlooked campus asset that many students miss. However, thanks to this article COLA students can realize its value and perhaps stop by and have a great time. Also, after attending a Four Year Graduation Rate Seminar, the article on this was great because I feel like so many students need to be on board. For the students that have not been lucky



enough to attend a seminar or even know about this issue, the article is extremely important. Overall, the Liberator is a great benefit to Liberal Arts Students because it keeps us in the loop while at the same time, teaching us new things about the campus and the world around us. ■ CAROLINE TOSBATH



06 Photo by Marisa Montemayor
09, 18 Photos by Murphy Carter , 07 from CC.org

On the Cover

Photo by Marisa Montemayor

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Love it? Hate it? Let us know! Letters to the editor reviewing articles from this issue will be printed in the next edition of *THE LIBERATOR*.

THE LIBERATOR is the official publication of The Liberal Arts Council. As a liberal arts-focused news magazine, we aim to keep students connected to the university through updates on legislation, campus affairs and student life. All questions, comments and concerns can be directed to THE LIBERATOR at:

utlacpromotions@gmail.com



THE LIBERATOR

Marisa Montemayor
Co-Editor | Photo Editor

Murphy Carter
Harrison Dromgoole
Mallory Fouth
Jordan Greenberg
Charlotte Hockens
Cassie Maneen

Cheyenne Smith
Co-Editor | Design Editor

Rachel Marino
Lorri Marlow
Usman Masood
Aileen O'Leary
Ben Sherman
Natasha Smith



Fusion

Award-winning Asian a capella group mixes genres for spring concerts



Tuning their pipes. Hum a capella members rehearse their new material in preparation for spring concerts. Photo by Marisa Montemayor

It's rehearsal night for Hum A Cappella, and the energy is palpable, hanging thick in the air. The bass chords are perfect, the pitch is just right, and the voices flow together seamlessly. Everyone knows that this harmony is the one to choose for the next show.

What you might not expect, however, is that the catalyst for this a cappella group's musical high is a mash-up of Adele's hit song Rolling in the Deep and a Bollywood song, O Re Piya. When you were slugging through last summer's intense heat listening to Adele belt out those tired lines over and over on the radio, did you ever think you'd hear the song fused with a track from an Indian Bollywood film? Probably not.

Founded in 2002, Hum A Cappella is the University's only South Asian A Cappella group. The organization is a fusion A Cappella group, meaning members arrange music that includes portions of both English and traditional Hindi songs, garnering appeal across age groups and cultures.

Hum is also unique in their approach to musical creation.

"We always arrange our own music," external director and engineering senior Samyu Rao said. "It's a group process. A lot of other a cappella groups kind of have one person who will present an arrangement, but I think what we found is that letting everyone's ideas contribute makes our arrangement better."

Hum's creative approach has changed and developed in recent years, director Pragnya Maruda said. Maruda, a senior engineering student who began Hum her freshman year, said Hum has increased its emphasis on individual involvement.

"The arrangement style has completely changed from when I was a freshman to now," Maruda said. "It's become a lot more complex—freshman year we'd have a couple people arrange, but now, every individual person comes up with one part and then somehow, all 16 voices fit together as one. It's something really cool to see."

In addition to the arranging process, the selection of songs to perform includes the entire group, director Pragnya Maruda said. Group members pay close attention to pairing songs for each performance.

"We've got a group on Facebook, and people post ideas if they come up with a mash up, or just have an idea in their head that they think would be awesome to do," Maruda said. "We look at the kinds of gigs we have and vote on what kind of songs we want to do, and then we vote on exactly what to arrange together. When we are trying to arrange a song, we'll try out different approaches, and you can always tell when we've found the right one because, I, for one, start freaking out."

Hum brings their musical arrangements to a variety of venues, from talent shows to weddings, and, recently, to the iTunes store. After releasing their second album, Hum:

The Revolution, last April, the group aired a new single in January to airwaves on Dallas' Indian radio station, 104.9 Funasia.

"[Going on the radio] was good because it reached a lot of members of the community who wouldn't necessarily know about a cappella music," Maruda said. "The older generation that is used to listening to just the Hindi songs on the radio or in movies were like, 'What is a cappella style?'"

This semester, Hum will travel to competitions and talent shows, including the Festival of India, one of the largest state-run Indian talent shows in Texas. In the upcoming competition seasons, Hum hopes to earn national recognition.

"We actually placed second [at the Festival] in 2010 so we are hoping to bring it back," Maruda said. "For this coming semester, we are trying to prepare ourselves to go national. We are trying to work on our fundraising to get everything together to ideally go to Anahat, one of the two major South Indian collegiate a cappella competitions in Berkeley in the fall."

While the TV show Glee who might have you believe that student music groups are full of drama and internal rivalry, Maruda said Hum provides her with a second family and a great time.

"In Hindi, Hum means 'we,' so it's kind of like a unity sort of thing," she said. "Before the music, we are always a family first, so we call it our 'Hum family.'"

■ JORDAN GREENBERG



SOPA, PIPA lead to Internet blackout

Google Search

I'm Feeling Lucky

Tell Congress: [Please don't censor the web!](#)

Controversial Bills Raise Questions Of Managing Online Content, Copyrights

On Wednesday, January 18th, Wikipedia and Reddit blacked out their websites in protest of Congress' controversial Stop Online Piracy Act, causing bored college students to find other means of figuring out the degrees of separation between Chumbawumba and the Dead Sea Scrolls (three). The bill, a rewrite of the Senate's PROTECT IP Act proposed by Republican representative Lamar Smith of Texas, expands the ability of federal law enforcement to combat intellectual property theft over the Internet from websites based outside of the United States. Due to extensive lobbying and public opposition, SOPA in its current form is unlikely to pass. Representative Smith and Senate majority leader Harry Reid postponed voting on SOPA and PIPA respectively.

In its current form, SOPA gives the US Department of Justice and copyright holders the ability to request court orders against websites based outside of US jurisdiction, which may include blocking advertisers, payment agencies, and Internet service providers from doing businesses with websites accused of copyright violations; effectively wiping them off the internet. The bill also expands penalties for streaming illegal content and selling counterfeit goods on the web. Anyone found guilty of streaming copyrighted content 10 times within a 6-month period faces up to five years in prison.

Supporters of the bill state that intellectual property remains one of the driving forces behind the American economy, and copyright violation jeopardizes American jobs. They believe that the law as is does not adequately protect copyright holders on the web in foreign websites, and the websites that host the copyrighted content are the most accessible defendants. They also state that patients who attempt to buy prescription drugs online do not necessarily have the ability to see through cleverly disguised websites claiming to sell brand-named products.

Individuals and groups opposing SOPA claim

that the law violates freedom of speech over the Internet and creates Draconian penalties for hosting copyrighted material, often making comparisons to Internet regulation laws in authoritarian nations like China. Opponents of the legislation also argue that it puts an unnecessary burden on websites such as YouTube and Flickr, which make profits hosting user-generated content, by forcing them to spend more time filtering through content. Websites may also need to take extra precautions that may result in consumers' denial of access to legal content.

"I think that by passing legislation such as that, you're pretty much taking away the foundations of what the Internet has become," said Amanda Lacey, a sophomore sociology major. "Some of the most popular websites, which are great hubs for discussion, information sharing, and ideas, would most likely disappear, and then what would we be left with?"

Many web-based companies also criticize the language of SOPA because of its broad, vague language, which seems disconnected from the reality of e-commerce. They also state that the bill creates fear amongst investors concerned with legal liabilities and may encourage companies to relocate overseas in order to avoid lawsuits, moving jobs. Edward J. Black, president of the Computer and Communication Industry Association, a tech-based advocacy group, claimed that SOPA does little to combat actual pirate websites and instead hurts legitimate companies.

SOPA has support from companies and trade unions in the television, film, and music industry. The MPAA, RIAA, Viacom, and The Directors Guild all pledge support for the act. Companies opposing SOPA include Google, Yahoo!, Facebook, Zynga, and eBay. Non-governmental organizations such as Reporters Without Borders, the ACLU, and Human Rights Watch joined the opposition as well. Also, several congressmen of both parties moved to oppose the bill upon witnessing widespread



(top) Black out. Google placed a black bar over its logo on January 18 in protest of Congress' SOPA and PIPA bills. (above) Representative Lamar Smith (R-Texas) proposed SOPA as a rewrite of the Senate's PIPA bill. Photos from [cretaivecommons.org](#)

opposition amongst voters as well as corporations.

"Censorship of media is similar to the government opening Pandora's box," said Taj Bruno, a sophomore international relations and American studies major. "Once the government is able to set restrictions on our rights, their power and strength will exponentially grow, and the people's voice will be smothered."

The Obama administration recently stated that although Congress needs to worry about protecting intellectual property, the White House refuses to support any legislation infringing on freedom of speech.

■ USMAN MASOOD

Censorship of media is similar to the government opening Pandora's box. Once the government is able to set restrictions on our rights, their power and strength will exponentially grow, and the people's voice will be smothered."

TAJ BRUNO
sophomore international relations
and American studies major

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CAREER SERVICES

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PROFESSOR SPOTLIGHT

MATT RICHARDSON

A quiet library, an intimate gathering, the room heavy with anticipation. Then, in a lyrical voice they hear, “It was quiet for a time, but we kept breathing.”

Each of Professor Matt Richardson’s pieces is voiced by a character, but contains autobiographical elements from the poet’s life. Through several poems read in quick succession, the narrator exposes a grieving wife and a bewildered child. When asked about his poems after the reading, Richardson reveals that each short poem provides brief insight into the life of a family whose patriarch is dying. Like mosaics where individual photos come together to show a larger picture, the collected poems expose deeper insight into the love and suffering of a family.

Like many artists, Richardson has a phenomenal ability to express emotion. With tender rage, Richardson reads, “I spit fire,” and with sorrow, “leaves me like a snowman melting in winter thaw.” Both chilling and sensual at once, one poem reads, “Desire haunted her.”

When not composing his own work,

Professor Richardson studies and teaches feminist and queer theory literature. Getting his start with *The Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press*, Richardson worked with what he described as the “Founding Mothers” of Black Feminist Theory—Barbara Smith and Audre Lorde. These women’s impact on Richardson’s future plans catapulted him into the world of women’s rights and activism. Richardson describes his time with these feminist giants as a “dream come true.”

While many students are familiar with feminist theory, queer theory is a newer and trending field.

“Queer theory involves looking at queer communities around the globe and examining their cultural production, but also thinking critically about the fact that they exist as a whole.”

“Queer theory involves looking at queer communities around the globe and examining their cultural production [...] but also thinking critically about the fact that they exist as a whole,” Richardson said.

Richardson’s undergraduate psychology studies seem like an unusual springboard for a career in feminist and queer theory, but his psychology background comes in handy when examining the literature produced by these movements. As he sees it, character analysis and literary criticism rely heavily on psychoanalysis. Creating art and participating in the community is an important part of Richardson’s life, but so is consuming the cultural products of different movements.

“[It is] food for the mind, soul, and body. [It is] replenishing to write, to perform, to watch films,” Richardson said.

“[It is] food for the mind, soul, and body. [It is] replenishing to write, to perform, to watch films,” Richardson said.

With a passion that extends far beyond the classroom, Richardson hopes that his courses provide not only lessons in literature, but also in life.

“I hope students walk away with an imperative to leave this world a little bit better than they found it and with a sense of the pleasure of thinking and analysis. Learning and scholarship and thinking don’t happen just in the classroom, they are part of everyday life and community building.”

■ AILEEN O’LEARY
PHOTO BY MARISA MONTEMAYOR

SXSW

NOT YOUR AVERAGE MUSIC FESTIVAL



Austin is one of the best cities in the country to hear live music. If you've been lacking in this aspect of Austin or just can't wait for more, have no fear the much awaited annual music festival SXSW is drawing near. During the weeks of March 9-18, film and music industries and connoisseurs from all over the world will flood Austin for the 25th annual SXSW Music Festival. Here's a little history on the music festival and what it has become:

The South by Southwest music festival (SXSW) was started in Austin in 1987. While historically Austin has always had an eclectic music scene, its position in the middle of Texas isolated it from music producers and fans alike. So, the music festival was started to close this gap and bring the rest of the world to Austin. Because of its immediate success, the SXSW Music Festival has expanded to include a film and interactive component as well. Aside from performances by well-known bands and film showings, there are panel discussions on everything from music to fashion design.

The music portion of the festival takes place March 13-18. While there will be some big name bands that you won't want to miss, many lesser known bands will be making appearances as well. From indie and folk singers with a sound similar to Mumford and Sons to electronic dance DJs and more obscure hip-hop artists, here is my list of tunes to keep your eye on during the week... ■ LORRI MARLOW

GRIMES

My number one recommendation for this year's SXSW is **Grimes**. Grimes is the stage name of Claire Boucher, a musician from Canada. Aside from being a talented singer and keyboard player, Grimes is about the religiosity and community music brings. Her music has a different quality than many. Listen to her song "Avi," you will understand why she is a must-see.

**WE ARE
AUGUSTINES**

We Are Augustines is an indie rock band from Brooklyn, New York. They can be roughly compared to The Killers in their sound, you know, minus the British part. Their new single "Chapel Song" from their album *Rise Ye Sunken Ships* is a must-have for your playlist.

THE FRAY

The Fray is probably a band you have heard of before made popular by their single "Over My Head (Cable Car)" in 2005. However, this rock band from Denver, Colorado, has some brand new music to bring to the table with the same great lyrical passion resonating from their first albums, with song like "Heartbeat" from their new album *Scars & Stories*.

**V FOR
VOLUME**

V for Volume is a rock 'n roll band from Columbia and will definitely add some flare to your music schedule. The female lead is very "in your face," but in a good way, like a more international version of Evanescence. Aside from being Columbian, they are unique in that they sing in English, because it is the universal language of rock 'n roll. Their song "Cheap Universe" will show you what you're in for.

**OF
MONTREAL**

Of Montreal is another favorite of mine. This indie band from Georgia most closely resembles Peter, Bjorn and John with their catchy tunes that make you want to bob your head and whistle. "Wraith Pinned to the Mist and Other Games" will get you hooked.

The SXSW music festival brings in a range of musicians from mainstream pop to the most obscure, and although many of the lesser known bands are classified as "indie" in their style, each has their own unique spin on the genre. So, no matter what your taste in music, movies, fashion, etc. is, there is sure to be a little bit of something for everyone.

Launching Studies

Undergraduate research provides opportunities for academic connections, inspiration

Kayla Steward and Katy Wheeler, psychology majors, work in the undergraduate research center, helping interview subjects and organize paper work. The two are studying the relationship between metabolism and the cardiovascular system after exercise and subsequent brain function. Photo by Murphy Carter



Welcome to college kids, it's time to ditch the ol' letterman and forget about band and baseball practice. You're in the big-leagues, and by this point in the school year, you've learned your lesson from your first college paper that Uncle Jeeves is aimless and the Google gods may not hold all of the answers. When chasing that A on your next research- oriented project, making use of academic journals, primary sources, and accredited databases, you realize that there is more to seeking information than the click of a button. Many of your classes probably feature textbooks and course packets assembled and written by the very guy or gal standing in the front of the room lecturing. Soon, it becomes all too real that the pesky tagline about being a nationally recognized research institution is far more than a title. Research is an integral part of higher learning, and one would be remiss to assume its place is only within math and science.

After having worked with Professor Julia Mickenberg of the Center for Women's and Gender Studies and the American Studies Department, sophomore Alyse Camus can attest, "It just made me so curious... when there's so much information out there, it's up to you to digest it, and you have to make what you want of it."

Camus, who is an American Studies major with minors in Russian and Government, found the perfect fit when her adviser contacted her about a research project looking at the impact of Russia on American women. She spent the semester aiding in processing research materials.

"For example, one week I'd go through rolls of microfilm, or just skimming through letters or journals...just basically looking for information and packaging it, so that it was easy for [Mickenberg] to process," Camus said.

Though the work was often times tedious, Camus learned the value of time management and some interesting other lessons. She said, "The collectivist movement in America, that it had influences in Russia, you would never learn that in school...one night, it was about 1a.m.

and I was reading all of these articles about the revolution in Russia, and one just went on about how a man escaped from prison in a barrel of pickles!"

Aside from hidden facts about Russia's past, Camus gained much more from her experience as an undergraduate research assistant.

"I would definitely consider [Mickenberg] a mentor. She was really the first person that made me feel confident that there is a connection between American and Russian studies, and she's been incredibly helpful and inspirational for my own studies as well. It's nice to have something concrete to show that liberal arts majors can really do something," Camus said. Her efforts proved to be impactful in her decision to eventually pursue graduate school. "Honestly, I cannot recommend this experience enough to people on campus. Especially in Liberal Arts, there's going to be someone researching something interesting, and a lot of them are eager for help," she said.

Fortunately enough, programs and organizations already exist in order to aid in connecting interested students in search of an exciting research position with professors. Eureka! is an online database through the university which enables undergrads to search for research opportunities by looking at available faculty profiles and their respective project interests. The site offers a breakdown of different areas of study, project summaries, and valuable information in order to contact the presiding faculty member.

The Liberal Arts Undergraduate Chapter for Research (LAUNCH) is another unique student-led group that eases and encourages fellow longhorns to get involved. LAUNCH External Vice-President and Psychology senior, Chelsea Kilzer said, "Research is a key part of our university, and I think undergraduate research is a great way to get exposure to the process at one of the top institutions."

Having experience in Dr. Rebecca S. Bigler's Child Development lab focusing on gender

roles and racial attitudes for four years, Kilzer understood early the value of learning outside of the classroom. This initial experience helped her develop and complete an undergraduate thesis dealing with gender differences on infidelity; a process she claims was a positive asset.

"My research relationships have helped me decide my professional path. The professors I have worked for make an effort to discuss my plan with me and want me to succeed. Every letter of recommendation I had written for graduate school was from a research professor," she said.

This sort of student outreach is exactly the impetus behind the creation of the Undergraduate Research Committee (URC), a new representative entity for student affairs in the Senate of College Councils on campus. UT sophomore and URC Committee Chair Ryan Hirsch said, "At the very core, we want all interested undergraduates to have the opportunity to either assist in faculty-led research or conduct independent research. This year, specifically, the committee has focused on exploring ways to integrate research into the curriculum through the establishment of an undergraduate research certificate program unique for each college."

This potential new Liberal Arts track-system would consolidate standing courses dealing with research methods and inquiry-based classes into a recognized academic certificate, capped off with undergraduate thesis. It is cap-stone experiences like these that help in keeping UT Austin one of the best public universities in the nation, and that serve to define and direct any academic career.

Hirsch, a Neurobiology major with extensive experience in research ranging from the Functional Genomics Research Stream to work in the Center for Learning and Memory, is uniquely qualified to understand the pertinence of research, particularly in the hard sciences. However, as a voting member of URC, she recognizes that undergraduate research is not for the laboratory alone.

"Students typically think of a science laboratory

when asked about undergraduate research...it exists in every field...from designing and building space shuttles, to investigating the academic achievement of minorities in higher education. The best way for students to get involved is to talk to professors, review faculty pages, and find out what exciting opportunities exist," she said.

With regards to the value of conducting research specifically in the College of Liberal Arts, Hirsch said, "Liberal arts students seek an education grounded in an interdisciplinary understanding of society, culture, and people. Research enhances this type of learning to prepare students to thrive in an ever-changing world."

Liberal arts students seek an education grounded in an interdisciplinary understanding of society, culture, and people. Research enhances this type of learning to prepare students to thrive in an ever-changing world.

RYAN HIRSCH
Sophomore
URC Committee Chair

Taking to heart the university's motto about changing the world, students like Alyse Camus, organizations like LAUNCH, and members of the Undergraduate Research Committee all seem to emphasize one thing: Longhorns have a responsibility to innovate and find new ways to use knowledge from the classroom to enhance real-world practices. The work is out there to be done, and the professors are anxious to collaborate. So whether you have a day that is simply lighter on classes or a passionate interest in an exciting topic, all you have to do is seek it out, and well, do your research.

■ CASSIE MANEEN



RACE

POLITICS



RELIGION

SEXUALITY



GENDER

FINANCES



DIVERSITY IN PROGRESS

Progressive: Making progress toward better conditions; favoring or advocating progress, change, improvement, or reform. If one spends five minutes on the UT website, it quickly becomes apparent how much the university does to improve. Day in and day out, year after year, UT is progressing and diversifying. From staff to students, UT looks nothing like it did just 20 years ago.

Today, the university has programs like the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE) and the Campus Climate Response Team (CCRT), resources like the Multicultural Engagement Center (MEC) and The Multicultural Greek Council, as well as clubs like GLBTAQ Business Association and Graduate Women in Computing. While there may be critics of the diversity in the UT student population, there is no denying UT attempts to make everyone feel welcome.

The fact that we have a division that's committed to community engagement and that's committed to matters of diversity from an academic side, as well as the programming practical practitioner side, speaks volumes,"

—Dr. Soncia Reagins-Lilly

"The fact that we have a division that's committed to community engagement and that's committed to matters of diversity from an academic side, as well as the programming practical practitioner side, speaks volumes," Dean of Students Dr. Soncia Reagins-Lilly said.

The DDCE (Division of Diversity and Community Engagement) at UT is a national model. Formed in 2006, the division became active in 2007 and is headed by Dr. Gregory J. Vincent, a professor in the School of Law and the Department of Higher Education. Their mission statement: To advance "socially just learning and working environments that foster a culture of excellence through diverse people, ideas and perspectives. We engage in dynamic community-university partnerships designed to transform our lives."

"Change in a culture is something really deep, and it takes a lot of work," Dr. Vincent said. "I think getting imbedded into the culture of the university in a relatively short time is an important part."

In fact, the DDCE has made tremendous progress in just five years. Not only does the DDCE recruit students from underrepresented backgrounds, but also reaches out to staff as well. "I think we have changed through our thematic faculty hiring initiative," said Dr. Vincent.

"We've been able to recruit an outstanding group of faculty who are now getting tenure, getting promoted, [and] who now really can change the curriculum [and] advise students. It's really exciting to have up to those 40 new faculty over this period of time."

Since 2005, DDCE's thematic faculty hiring initiative has worked with colleges across campus to bring in new staff from underrepresented backgrounds. New staff means new curriculum which ultimately means a more diverse student body.

However, no matter how diverse the campus is, it is still a campus, a place loaded with young people full of new thoughts, ideas, and conflict. Luckily, not many physical or violent cases happen at UT, according to Dr. Vincent, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't be ready. In the last year the Campus Climate Response Team (CCRT) has been initiated. A combination of already existing programs and new ones, CCRT was created to be able to quickly respond to any kind of campus climate incidents.

According to Dr. Sherri Sanders, Clinical Associate Professor and Associate Vice President for Campus Diversity and Strategic Initiatives, the CCRT arose from a case that brought up three questions: "Was the university equipped if there was a high profile, highly

charged, biased incident that really spread across campus?” The second question was, How can we make current diversity programs more robust? [And] the third question [was]: How can we increase tolerance and diversity?”

According to Dr. Sanders, Dr. Vincent, and many others, the CCRT has been very successful. From dealing with a controversial Republican tweet to Round Up incidents to graffiti, the CCRT speaks to all parties involved and finds out how to mitigate the situation as quickly as possible. Still, UT also tries to prevent incidents all together through education.

“Our Multicultural Engagement Center and Gender and Sexuality center, which are part of our student diversity initiatives, are constantly doing training sessions, workshops and events,” said Dr. Sanders. “The challenge is that the people who often attend workshops and events are the ones who ‘get it.’ How do you get those who don’t get it? [How do you get] moving the needle with them? And that’s the challenge.”

“The challenge is that the people who often attend workshops and events are the ones who ‘get it.’ How do you get those who don’t get it? [How do you get] moving the needle with them? And that’s the challenge.”
- Dr. Sanders

Though, there is no lack of effort on the part of UT. The Multicultural Engagement Center in the SAC houses groups such as African American Affairs, Latina/o Leadership Council, Longhorn American Indian Council, and more. The Gender and Sexuality Center caters to all women and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and ally (LGBTQA) communities. Race, ethnicity, and sexuality aside, there is a niche for everyone on campus.

“When I got to UT, I was looking to get involved in a Student Business organization, even though that wasn’t where I was taking classes,” said graduate student Richard Bellamy. “One of the organizations that I looked at had an info meeting, where they filled up one of the large classrooms and had us all go around the room, introduce ourselves... and [say] something along the lines of ‘what celebrity do you find attractive.’ I was the last person, and everyone else listed a celebrity of the opposite gender. I said Zac Efron. Almost all the room was silent at this point, except this one group of girls behind me that giggled awkwardly, one said to the other, ‘He’s joking, right?’ So I turned around and told her, ‘No, I’m serious.’ I didn’t end up joining that organization.”

UT is a big school and not every person or every group is going to have arms wide open. But, that is what UT is working towards. Even the Greek system is trying to diversify. At a Greek Multicultural info session, there are people with various backgrounds, from Creole to Indian to Arabic. The five chapters that make up the Multicultural Based Fraternities or Sororities are arguably some of the most diverse groups on campus.



“I am a Brother of Omega Delta Phi Fraternity Inc, which is a Hispanic based multicultural fraternity,” said junior David Sanchez. “Through my brotherhood I have gained [access] to councils such as the Latino Pan-Hellenic Council and the Latino Leadership Council, where issues that affect the Latino/Hispanic Community are discussed. I also know there are other organizations that address other minority groups on campus which goes to show that UT’s diversity is definitely increasing and at an all-time high.”

Recently, it seems the only people worried about diversity at UT are politicians, lawyers, writers, anyone who can gain from criticizing UT. Admittedly, UT first and foremost serves Texas. And with recent tuition increases, it has become tougher to statistically match Texas.

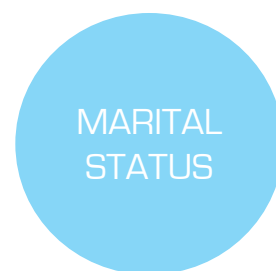
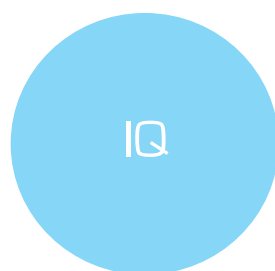
“Many Hispanics come from household[s] who cannot afford to be sent to a university outside of their hometown,” said Sanchez. “Many students with a Hispanic background rely heavily on federal financial aid, so cutting funds definitely affects us on a large scale. Many students, who have the option of coming here, do not because it is so expensive.”

While rising tuition and less financial aid are a considerable problem, it’s a hard problem to fight. With such a great staff, campus, and programs such as the DDCE, CCRT, MCE and countless more, the university takes a lot of money to run. However, the student body should not be dependent on money or solely these programs to integrate and diversify UT. Change in a culture is tough. Teaching acceptance is tough. But it doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try.

“I don’t think that we have been negligent and that we haven’t paid attention,” said Dean Lilly. “The University has and is progressing. It’s always evolving”

Most importantly, it is up to the students to keep the university progressive. UT may have a history that isn’t so bright and accepting. So what? That doesn’t mean students here and now can’t make it a place where we welcome everyone from every background. It will take time, but it has already begun. The past generation may have initiated the change, but it is up to the current one to enforce it.

■ RACHEL MARINO
PHOTOS BY MARISA MONTEMAYOR



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

MARGARET WELLIK

For most freshmen, a dorm is their first experience away from home... but for freshman and Plan II major Margaret Wellik spending a gap year in the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) meant coming to the 40 Acres with a year of independence under her belt. Having lived in a tent for two months in the middle of a snowy forest in Arizona, rebuilt homes for Katrina victims, and organized relief efforts in the apocalyptic destruction zone following Joplin, Missouri's devastating 2011 tornado, Wellik embodied UT's mission statement before stepping foot on campus. What starts with Margaret, changes the world.

Having been frustrated with the highly structured high school environment, Wellik sought a change bigger than one a university could offer. After high school, Wellik pursued service in AmeriCorps' (NCCC) as a way to spend her time serving the community. NCCC is a team-based AmeriCorps program that, in the organization's words, aims to "strengthen communities and develop leaders through direct, team-based national and community service." In teams of eight to 12, members are assigned four community-service projects during their 10-month commitment.

"You're put on a team, which essentially acts as your family for the 10 months of your service," Wellik said. "You aren't guaranteed anything when you go in. You know you'll be doing community service on a team, but you



PHOTO BY
MURPHY ANN CARTER

don't know where, when, how, or any of the details."

Wellik's 10-month commitment took her across the American Southwest, and each time her team served a different community need. Rebuilding homes in New Orleans, filing taxes for low-income families in Denver and helping the National Park Service remove an eight-ton boulder from a trail in Arizona, Wellik's team carried out AmeriCorps' mission.

A week into her last project while working at an assisted-living home in Denver, her team was called away to serve a community in need, in the most extreme sense. On May 22, 2011,

a catastrophic tornado tore through Joplin, MO., destroying 2,000 structures and taking the lives of some 160 people. During the 30-day limit an AmeriCorps volunteer can stay in a natural disaster zone, Wellik worked from sunrise til sunset to help Joplin.

"For the first half of [my stay], pretty much everybody that was there for AmeriCorps was doing very basic debris removal," Wellik said. "But what was cool about it was that we were leading all of the other volunteers that were coming in. And

nationwide, people were flooding in to come help."

Through the hot summer, Wellik worked in the field clearing debris and leading volunteers, as well as behind the

Wellik embodied
UT's mission
statement before
stepping foot on
campus.

scenes of Joplin's disaster relief. The apocalyptic scene surrounding her soon became apart of daily life.

"It's amazing how normal it becomes so quickly," she said.

Wellik's involvement with Joplin's recovery still continues. Jan. 31, Wellik returned to Joplin to attend a memorial service and said she would like to go back to volunteer when her schedule permits.

Among other things, AmeriCorps inspired Wellik to become a Liberal Arts major. Having believed she would enter with a major in nutrition, Wellik soon realized her heart lay elsewhere.

"[Americorps] made me realize that there are more things out there that interest me more [than Nutrition]," she said. "I think I would have realized that eventually once I went to college, but it was nice to realize that before I wasted a bunch of time."

While in Denver, Wellik applied to the Plan II Honors program, with hope that the interdisciplinary Liberal Arts program would enable her to try a variety of different classes. Wellik has also pursued the Social Entrepreneurship and Non-Profit Bridging Disciplines program, inspired by her non-profit experience during her service in NCCC. However, AmeriCorps has changed Wellik's life in more ways than simply selecting academic areas of focus.

"I've had exposure to different opportunities I wouldn't have had before, and I have seen myself being able to do things I wouldn't have ever thought about doing before," she said. "I have a bigger perspective of what's out there."

■ JORDAN GREENBERG

SPACE PHOTO FROM <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gsfcr/6330023430/>
Facts from the Official AmeriCorps Webpage

WHAT IS SHE
DOING NOW?

After her experience filing taxes for low-income families in Denver, Wellik continues to volunteer in Austin with the non-profit Foundations Communities, where she helps people in need fill out tax-returns.

AMERICORPS
FACTS

- 706,000: Number of people who have served as AmeriCorps members since 1994.
- 2.5 million: Number of disadvantaged youth tutored, mentored, or served by AmeriCorps members in fiscal 2010
- \$2 Billion: Total amount of Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards earned by AmeriCorps members since 1994.



3.8 MILLION TEACHERS

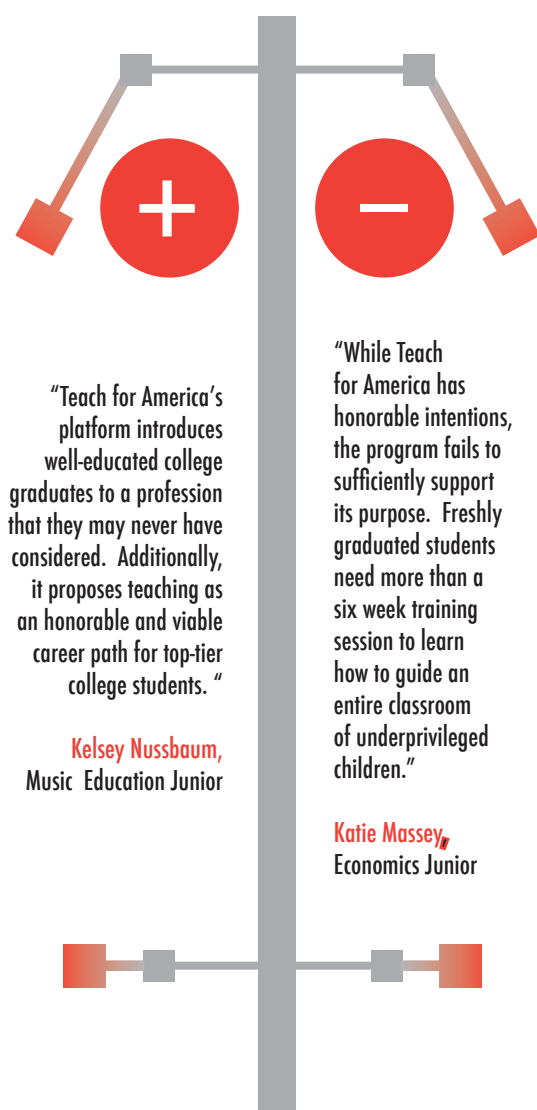
55.2 MILLION STUDENTS

14 K SCHOOL DISTRICTS

ONE NATION

A **POLARIZING** PROGRAM

Where do you stand on America's most controversial teaching recruitment program?



Many Teach for America

applicants readily admit that they are in it for job security.

University students who want to pursue a career in education major in education. Those who realize too late they want to teach turn to alternative certification. The rest who don't know what to do or can't find a job apply to TFA because it looks phenomenal on a resume and they "do good" along the way. Despite its lofty and admirable goals, Teach for America is failing the system it attempts to fix.

TRAINING FOR THE JOB

Teaching is a vocation and should be treated as such. As a former UTeach student, I have experienced education courses and taught fourth and seventh grade first hand. Teaching is not for the faint-hearted. After taking Adolescent Development, Adolescent Literacy, and learning a great deal about classroom management, I still have very far to go. These classes teach future educators how teenagers think, how their brains operate chemically, and what the average teen can and cannot handle. To the best of my knowledge, Teach for America candidates do not receive this level of training in the summer between graduation and their first year in the classroom. Three months cannot compensate for four years of preparing to be an educator.

SCEWING THE STATS

One UT student who recruits for Teach for America compares two local high schools in the Austin area to help illustrate the need for applicants. Westlake High School students are regularly admitted to top colleges in the country. However, only 48.3% of East Austin's Reagan High School students graduated on time in 2009. The TFA recruiter states that the only differences between these schools are their neighborhoods they are in and their educational resources. What most people don't realize is that Westlake High School is the only high school in the Eanes Independent School District and unlike Reagan, it does not need to compete with other schools for funding. Not all problems within the public education system can be fixed inside the classroom, like many TFA recruiters point out. Many are at the administrative level.

The lack of human resources can be fixed in the classroom. If students attending schools in low-income areas don't have the same educational opportunities as their higher-income peers, shouldn't we be paying experienced career educators to go into those classrooms? Yes, students may be temporarily inspired by a young twenty-something year old college graduate, but they will be better educated by professional teachers. Lawyers attend law school, doctors attend medical school, and teachers study education. Mending the public education system is not a matter of paying a few unqualified men and women to participate in short term contracts; it is a matter of changing public policy.

The United States Armed Forces pay men and women to go back to college after several years of service. Every candidate for public office discusses the value of education so why not pay for it like we do national defense? To quote Academy and Emmy winning American screenwriter, Aaron Sorkin, "Education is everything. We don't need little changes. We need gigantic, monumental changes. Schools should be palaces. The competition for the best teachers should be fierce. They should be making six-figure salaries. Schools should be incredibly expensive for government and absolutely free of charge to its citizens, just like national defense."

FINDING A SOLUTION

Where does the money come from? Stop subsidizing huge food companies, give small farmers a chance, and educate today's youth. To do right by the next generation, don't Teach for America, demand policy changes by participating in the democratic process. Most importantly though, demand change of yourself. Students, especially at challenging schools like UT, frequently get bogged down and complain about class readings, exams, labs, and papers. If we want students who have no tangible connection to college to value their education, we need to begin by doing so ourselves. School is hard, life is hard, but we need to lead by example. If you want to teach, enroll in the college of education. If you want to change public education, adjust your approach to school and become actively involved with the people that can make the policy changes we need.

■ AILEEN O'LEARY

\$PRING BREAK

ON A BUDGET

Spring break—it's like the prom of college—constantly hyped up by American pop culture as the ultimate university experience. Supposedly it is a week filled with beaches, booze, and bathing suits. But not all of us have the money or desire to jet set to a tropical location this spring break. So how can we still have a college-worthy spring break? Thankfully, Austin is versatile enough to be a perfect spring break destination for those wishing to stay on a budget.

■ CHARLOTTE HOCKENS

PHOTOS FROM CREATICECOMMONS.ORG



Hamilton Pool

Cost: \$10 per car or \$3 per pedestrian

Hamilton Pool Nature Reserve lies thirty miles Southwest of Austin, but this breathtaking 50-foot waterfall and pool is worth a drive. Bring your bathing suit and have fun exploring the natural habitat.

Mount Bonnell

Cost: Free

Mount Bonnell is located in Northwest Austin and provides a scenic view over Lake Austin. Take a short hike to the top of Mount Bonnell for one of the best over views of the city including downtown Austin and the 360 bridge. There are many areas take photos, have a picnic, or watch the sunset.



Chicken Shit Bingo at Ginny's Little Longhorn Saloon

Cost: \$2 per bingo ticket

Every Sunday, Austinites gather around a large bingo board at Ginny's Little Longhorn Saloon, for what has to be one of the weirdest things about Austin. Instead of numbers being chosen at random, a chicken selects which number will be called next. Listen to a live band and enjoy free chili dogs while you wait for the next number to be called.

Cathedral of Junk

Cost: Free

This massive structure made of over 60 tons of junk lies in the backyard of a local Austin artist. The artist has been collecting other people's junk for years and is constantly adding to his collection of art. If you decide to see the Cathedral, there's a good chance you'll be able to meet the artist, who is known to chat up visitors and invite them to climb through the inside of the Cathedral. The Cathedral has gained notoriety outside of Austin and was featured in Spy Kids 2.



360 Bridge

Cost: Free

The 360 bridge (also called the Pennybacker Bridge) is over Lake Austin on highway 360. When you get to the bridge, park on the side of the road and walk along the path leading up the elevated wall next to the bridge. The end of the path is a gorgeous outlook of the 360 bridge and Lake Austin.

Camping at Enchanted Rock

Cost: \$6/day

For those students wanting to get out of their apartment or dorm room over spring break, an affordable option is camping at Enchanted Rock. Enchanted Rock is in Fredericksburg (about a two hour drive from campus). The camping site is filled with activities like backpacking, hiking, stargazing, picnicking, and bird watching.



THE SLACKER

WHO IS THE SLACKER AND HOW DID HE MASTER THE FRIEND ZONE?

PLAN OF ATTACK

To those of you in the friend zone during the month of love- this one's for you... Bless your hearts. A quick synopsis for those who've had the luxury of ignorance – the friend zone is when you're interested in a romantic relationship with a person, but that person “just wants to be friends.” As far as I see it, when you plunge into the friend zone and begin your harrowing expedition, you have two paths: A) Seek other fish in the sea, or B) Hope your interest falls for you. Either way, once you reveal your affections and get denied, you've blown yourself out of the water. Regardless of which path you take, you're doomed.

If you choose path B and obtain a friend zone level of 100, whether your interest manipulates your affection is irrelevant, because you voluntarily become their slave, as oxymoronic as it sounds. You grant their every demand, and just like a regular partner in a relationship, you support them. But it isn't mutual. At face value, you may appear to be in a relationship, but the sad truth is that you aren't. And if you're desperate enough to become another person's slave, you won't even become a third wheel. You're a chauffeur driving your fake significant other around until they find who they want in the car with them. Also, you will not be paid. Spending one's non refundable time and effort to support another person in exchange for being treated like a tampon of emotional support that gets tossed away until it's needed again, that's just sad. Period.

THE UGLY TRUTH

Some may justify this self imposed celibacy by claiming it's in the name of love, but the beginning of non-platonic procedures is one of three things; a learned chemical attraction to another person's pheromones, a Western ideal rooted in Medieval chivalry, or a game. I'll ignore the first because I'm a liberal arts major, and the second died after women's rights, so I'll consider the latter.

Now for the ugly truth behind imprisonment in the friend zone, flawlessly demonstrated by the Half Blood Prince, Severus Snape. If you've got everything going for you- the emotional support, the pleasure to be around, the good memories and times- and you're still sent to exile, then the romantic love you seek is unreachable. Probably because your love interest finds you physically undesirable. Don't underestimate the power of the lusty side. Sure, you can call it shallow, but it's there no matter what. Physical intimacy and pleasure are a part of human nature, regardless of what rug people may shove it under. If you lack whatever your friend wants in the long run of a relationship, you're screwed (not physically). I'm not claiming it's the basis of a romantic relationship- because if it was, everybody and their hand would be considered romantically involved- but it's certainly a factor that distinguishes friendship from something more.

BUT YOU'RE AWESOME, OKAY?

That's not to say you're forever alone and hideous. Beauty really does lie in the eye of the beholder, and peoples' vision changes all the time. Just remember first and foremost, love yourself. Have some self respect and avoid becoming a doormat. Don't sacrifice your time and effort for something that isn't mutual. A friendship filled with my recipe of love will guarantee you one of three consequences: either your friend will finally fall for you after realizing how important you truly are, you'll end up with a good friend, or you'll find someone else. Actually, I don't really know if you'll find someone else. I'm just trying to be nice. Just remember, relationships may come and go like waves, and the sea has its shallows, there is always a deeper end, and there are fish everywhere. I should write Hallmark cards. ■ PHOTO FROM CREATIVECOMMONS.COM



WHAT

25

FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER: Not only does your “friend” not want to date you, but they don't even like you as a person. Run away, beast!

LEVEL

50

HELGA PETAKI: Take a chill pill! Pretending to not have romantic feelings for your friend (despite your secret obsession) seems to be working... a little too well.

ARE

75

JACOB BLACK: Sure your friend entertained the idea of dating you for a while, but now they're on to better, paler things. Instead of moving on, you'd prefer to wait it out until you can date your friend's offspring. No, that's not weird - not at all.

YOU?

100

SEVERUS SNAPE: The lowest of lows. Your friend is not interested. In fact, he or she isn't even alive! All alone in the land of the living, you're the sad sap carrying out their will from beyond the grave. How...sweet.

LEGISLATION RECAP

SR. 1111

Calling for a University Policy to Assist in Reducing Course Material CostsProgram

PASSED

SR. 1112

In Support of Creating Unofficial Online Transcripts

PASSED

SR. 1113

In Support of Displaying Waitlist and Enrollment Details in the Course

PASSED

CAMPUS UPDATES

CTBAC UPDATES

The College Tuition and Budget Advisory Committee for the College of Liberal Arts sent their third tuition and resource recommendations to Dean Randy Diehl this January.

The first recommendation is to require students to petition to an academic advisor in order to drop below the minimum 12 hours required of a full time student. Requiring this would allow evaluation on a case-by-case basis, thus putting more students in classes and increasing timely graduation.

The second recommendation asks that the Dean's office take a stronger role in

selecting courses for the summer session. With a stronger role, the Office of the Dean can prioritize the classes with the highest demand, instead of selection typically based upon what faculty the department will offer.

The third recommendation is the creation of an optional three year degree program, based on the "Degree in Three" offered by the College of Natural Sciences. This would be strictly optional.

Our fourth recommendation involves the creation of an incentive for completion of degree in a timely fashion. This could be implemented through an additional

incentive program (for example, the program could allow students who complete 30 hours each academic year to collect 250 dollars).

The fifth and final recommendation will be in conjunction with other CTBACs and will call for increased freedom for the individual colleges in faculty merit pay increases. Though not hopeful of this recommendation passing anytime soon, the committee still advocates its eventual implementation.

send comments to la.ctbac@gmail.com

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MARCH 2012						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

MARCH 12-15

SPRING BREAK

APRIL 2

LAST DAY AN UG MAY (W/ DEAN'S APPROVAL) DROP A CLASS

APRIL 16 - 27

REGISTRATION FOR SUMMER AND FALL SEMESTER

MAY 4

LAST DAY OF CLASS

MAY 9-12, 14-15

FINAL EXAMINATIONS

COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY FOCUS

In the past, the Campus and Community Focus Committee has focused on finding volunteer opportunities for Liberal Arts Council members. This year, committee chair Cole Cable wants to achieve an even bigger goal. "This year the direction that Campus and Community Focus wants to go in is planning and implementing community service and organizing our own events for College of Liberal Arts students to get involved in," Cable said.

This past semester, the committee achieved two particularly noteworthy accomplishments. The first was the Letters to the Troops campaign, where the Liberal Arts Council wrote 300 letters to current United States military personnel. The second event adopted Christmas angels from the Salvation Army Angel Tree program. "I think the most successful part of last semester was when we had each committee sponsor a child during Christmas time for the Salvation Army Angel Tree Program," Cable said. "We ended up with sixteen angels."

So what is in store for the CCF

committee this semester? College of Liberal Arts students can expect a variety of events that cover different types of community service. "We have Project 2012, Explore UT, and Forty Acres Fest," Cable said. "But the main thing that Campus and Community Focus wants to do this semester is have a Liberal Arts Council service day or a College of Liberal Arts service day where students can come by and find out that they can get involved in the campus and community and how they can serve or volunteer in some way."

■ CHARLOTTE HOCKENS



COMMITTEE CHAIR PHOTOS
BY ARMANDO VERA

CAMPUS UPDATES AND STUDNT
OPINION PAGESBY RACHEL MARINO

STUDENT OPINION

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

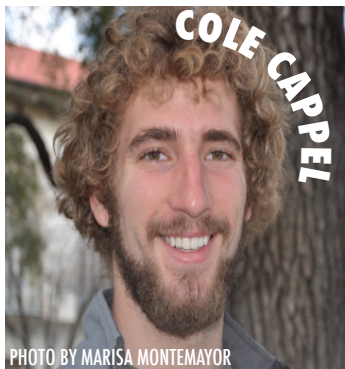


PHOTO BY MARISA MONTEMAYOR

STUDENT LEADER OF THE MONTH

I am the Director of Camp Texas, a camp for incoming UT freshman which is part informational, part social, and part leadership training. We are more than doubling our size this year to include 100 counselors and about 850 campers.

I am the UT Water Ski Team's RecSports Rep and Instructional Team Captain. I act as the student liaison between the club team and UT RecSports and am also in charge of new member development and retention.

I work for RecSports on the Field/Tennis staff as a Building Coordinator. I am in charge of overseeing activity on Clark Field, Whitaker Fields, and Whitaker Tennis.

I am a fourth year working toward a degree in Urban Studies with a minor in Architecture as well as the Business Foundations Certificate. ■ COLE CAPPEL

Congratulations to this year's Liberal Arts Council's Study Abroad Scholarship winners. Scholarship amounts range from \$250 to \$2,000 and are based on both need and scholastic aptitude. At the beginning of every long semester, current undergrad Liberal Arts students have the opportunity to apply for a scholarship to help fund studying abroad. To apply, students must be an undergraduate currently enrolled in The College of Liberal Arts and must have a UT-Austin GPA of 2.75.

SPRING 2012 LAC STUDY ABROAD SCHOLARSHIP

Wen Zhang
Lindsay Carter
Hannah Waitt
Collin Norkiewicz
Tara Boggaram
Jessica Devenyns
Elise Minajarez

Coming
Soon

Liberal Arts Council
Excellence in
Advising Award
Nominations
announced
March 9th

LIBERAL ARTS COUNCIL CORNER

COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT FACULTY AFFAIRS

The Faculty Affairs committee, headed by sophomore Cassie Maneen, strives to give students greater access to their professors.

"Faculty Affairs first and foremost wants to provide a channel between students and faculty members, be it professors, assistant professors, or graduate students," Maneen said.

Maneen knows first hand that as a student reaching out to a professor can be a daunting task. "They can seem so elusive, like they are these high and mighty beings that you can't talk to," she said.

That is why FA hosts events throughout the semester that give students the opportunity to interact with their professors outside of the classroom, often in a casual way.

Faculty Affairs believes that professors are a crucial resource for Liberal Arts students, who sometimes have difficulty deciding what career path they will pursue after earning their degree.



"You can go beyond the coursework and ask faculty about the things they've done in their life and where they've worked previously. The professors are a perfect way to help answer the question, 'What do I do with a degree in ___?'" said Maneen.

FA is hitting the ground running this semester by continuing to build the Liberal Arts Faculty Support System, or LAFSS. The initiative is meant to open a direct line of communication with professors and students about Faculty Affairs and LAC.

FA greatly values input and ideas for future events. Email Cassie Maneen at c_maneen@yahoo.com with suggestions.

■ CHARLOTTE HOCKENS

THE OUTLET

CAMPUS LIFE, POP CULTURE, MINUTIAE.
MUNDANE OR INSPIRING, THE LIBERATOR SHARES ITS
THOUGHTS ON... WELL... EVERYTHING.

The UTC's escalators remind me of a heart. They pump students through the building, but when they stop working and get clogged, all hell breaks loose and someone might die.

HARRISON DROMGOOLE

Hide your kids, hide your wife, and hide your husband cause tuition is rapin' everybody out here!

RACHEL MARINO

I want to get a Ph.D for the sole purpose of being allowed to wear a tweed jacket.

USMAN MASOOD

So sick of all this election campaigning - let's just get to November already.

MARISA MONTEMAYOR

For a party opposing the Democrats, these elephants sure are being some jackasses.

CASSIE MANEEN

They added a coffee shop in the FAC! Thank goodness - the walk to the Starbucks at the Union was too far.

CHARLOTTE HOCKENS

If my life went according to my Pinterest, I'd have amazing style, and somehow only eat decadent looking desserts, all while maintaining a great body from the motivational pictures and workouts I pin.

MALLORY FOUTCH

This concerns me: "The State of the Union ruined tv last night, there were like no new shows..."

AILEEN O'LEARY

That awkward moment when you walk outside in clothes for 30 degree weather and realize it's 85 in February.

LORRI MARLOW

Someone call A&E I need a Robot Unicorn Attack intervention.

CHEYENNE SMITH

COMEDY CENTRAL

LOCAL CLUBS, GROUPS PROVIDE AUSTIN WITH LAUGHTER, COMEDIC TRAINING

While Austin is highly regarded for its live music scene, an aspect of this city we have all come to love and have often overlooked is its comedic offerings. Solid comedic acts can be found in many different areas of Austin, from the happening downtown area to our very own Forty Acres. So, if you're a patron of comedic performers, or need to unwind and de-stress, look no further than these locations for a laugh.

● ESTHER'S FOLLIES

A staple on Austin's historic 6th Street since April Fool's Day of 1977, Esther's Follies set the standard for comedy in Austin since founders Michael Shelton and Shannon Sedwick felt compelled to pay tribute to Esther Williams. Williams, a retired American competitive swimmer and former MGM movie star, inspired the aquatic theme that can be found at Esther's today.

"My husband, Michael Shelton, and I started Esther's Follies in 1977," Shannon Sedwick said. "I've always been the 'onstage' persona, and Michael the behind-the-scenes guy, but he used to don a wig and dress on occasion to play a wild revival preacher."

With nine regular performers and the occasional guest comedian, Esther's offers shows Thursday through Saturday nights each week. Tickets usually run between \$20 and \$30 dollars, but if you're smart, you'll buy in advance. Featuring shows usually reflective of current issues, Esther's is sure to make you feel a bit light-hearted about the stressful situation in America, if only for an hour.

While Esther's tries to keep their comedy current to news and issues, the performers also strive to create comedy that is timeless. "My favorite is coming up with what we call 'Evergreen' material, meaning it's material that works at any time and is not reliant on topical news," performer Cindy Wood noted.

Swing by Esther's Follies at 525 E 6th Street, or give them a call at (512) 320-0198.



● ESTHER'S FOLLIES

● CAP CITY COMEDY CLUB

Originally opened as the Laff Stop in 1986, Cap City Comedy Club is a sure spot in Austin to find some top-notch comedy. Cap City not only features plenty of different shows from big-name comics, such as Loni Love and Anthony Jeselnik, but also offers an assortment of different classes for all different levels of amateur comics.

"We specialize in stand-up and bring in over 150 professional comedians every year," Cap City General Manager Margie Coyle said. "However, improv, magic, and others have had their place in the club."

Cap City also holds their own Funniest Person in Austin contest each year, scheduled to kick off in April. The winner receives \$2,500 dollars, and the contest is currently running on its 27th year. "[The contest] is a true Austin gem," commented Coyle.

One of the most unique aspects of Cap City is the classes offered. One class, called Defensive Driving, is exactly what you think it is, a State approved class designed to help you get your traffic tickets dismissed. Taught by professional comedians, this alternative to sitting in a boring defensive driving lecture will only set you back \$30 dollars and is sure to provide some entertainment. Defensive Driving is held every Saturday from 9 a.m. -3 p.m., and make sure to show up a bit early with your license, ticket, and appetite for laughter.

Another Cap City original is their Comedy Gym, pioneered by Sam Cox. This program, which budding comics or public speakers can participate in through UT and ACC has been Cox's project since its beginnings in 1986. For a fee of \$130, one can venture through five weeks of comedy training, learning how to write, perform, deliver, and also promote themselves in a professional fashion.

The comedic stylings of Cap City can be found at 8120 Research Blvd. #100, and you can call them at (512) 467-2333.

● THE NEW MOVEMENT

Founded by former comedy and improv students Chris Trew and Tami Nelson, who evacuated New Orleans because of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, The New Movement opened its doors to Austin in February 2009. Taking an alternative approach to both the performance and study of comedy, TNM brings the irrational, bizarre, or absurd to Austin. According to founder Tami Nelson, "Our mantra in classes is to bear-hug the information at the very top of a scene in order to map the rest of the scene." Co-founder of TNM, Chris Trew attended Louisiana State University and fell in love with comedy at a young age. "I've been involved [at TNM] as creative director since day one, and I couldn't be prouder," said Trew.

Along with frequenting the stage of TNM as himself, Trew also takes the form of his alter rap ego, Terp2it. He has released three albums under this name, including one titled "Half Man Half Beard." "I get to be like what I never am, which is a handsome bearded man with loads of personality," Trew said.

For a truly unique comedy experience, look no farther than The New Movement. The performers at TNM are all promising comics with a love for their work. Performer Mandy Spivey commented, "The great thing about working with TNM is that nothing ever feels like work!" Offering five different levels of improv classes, from basic improv theory to advanced scene driving, TNM gives anyone a chance to gain comedic knowledge. With UT students and alumni in their regular performing cast and class enrollment, TNM is an authentic away to stay true to the Austin comedy scene.

You can check out TNM at 1819 Rosewood Avenue or on their comedy blog, www.iprovwins.com, and reach them at (512) 788-2669.



● THE NEW MOVEMENT

● GIGGLEPANTS

For home-grown, Forty Acres style comedy, look no further than the group Gigglepants, originally formed here at UT eight years ago. A primarily short-form comedy group, this clan of humorists put on performances reminiscent of the long-running television show *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*

Started by two UT students who dabbled in comedy in Houston, they decided to pay homage to their old mentor, whose nickname was "Gigglepants," by starting a group in his honor. Gigglepants continues to this day under the motto "good clean fun," as their shows always provide a style of comedy unoffensive to all and open to all ages. Their shows have always been free and will continue to stay that way.

Evan T. Atherton, a graduate student here at UT, has performed with Gigglepants for about a semester and has brought (to the group) a strong background in comedy. Atherton has done improv at Merlin Works and Institution Theater and has also performed in Austin's own Out of Bounds Comedy Festival that takes place in September.

"Improv is awesome because it's cheaper than therapy and feels just as good. After clowning around with Gigglepants, I feel awesome," Atherton commented.

Now in the safe hands of Colin Bates, current captain of Gigglepants, the group has no plans of leaving the UT campus lonely or un-laughing any time soon. "Our first goal is to have fun, from the aspect of the player, but we also want the audience to be having fun," commented Bates. Gigglepants aims to keep their shows concerning different happenings both at UT and the world at large.

"We really hope that when people come to our shows, they have a good time, they laugh, they have fun, and that they appreciate comedy in the moment, comedy that is genuine, happening right in front of their face. It feels more real, and it's also more fun for us to have the limitation of playing clean improv, showing a different aspect of humor," Bates explained.



THE LIBERATOR

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